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## **THE DEMAND TO GOVERNMENT “DESIST AND DEMERGE”**

**Twelve months to the day from the announcement on 12 May 2016 of the “Death of Local Democracy”, the Berejiklian Government’s forced council amalgamation policy is in tatters and hundreds of millions of dollars of public moneys wasted.**

Brian Halstead President of Save Our Councils Coalition (SOCC) says: “Communities across NSW remain very angry with the Government’s arrogant and undemocratic actions, its broken promises, the spin over alleged benefits of mergers, a lack of transparency and respect for local communities and a total failure to listen to the people. This anger was graphically revealed in the recent massive swings against the Liberal/National Party in the Orange, North Shore, Manly and Gosford By-elections.”

“The merged mega councils forcibly created by this Government are failing as was predicted. They cannot really represent the interests and needs of local communities – as large bureaucracies remote, insensitive and self-serving. Truly local councils remain flexible and effective through knowledge of place, community support, outsourcing services and cooperation with neighbouring councils,” Halstead says.

“The decision in the Ku-ring-gai Court of Appeal case reveals that the process adopted by the Government to force through its mergers was fatally flawed and patently unfair to the community, the councils and their own handpicked delegates. Legal error has infected all merger proposals,” says SOCC Spokesman Phil Jenkyn.

**“Woollahra’s case seeking leave to appeal to the High Court is to be decided on Friday 12 May. At stake is the survival of an historic, sustainable and successful council whose community strongly opposes being forcibly amalgamated.**

“Communities strongly support legislation before the Parliament to demerge forced councils, terminate merger proposals in the courts, and require a binding plebiscite before any future amalgamation. The Government should support legislation proposed to this end by other political parties,” Jenkyn says.

**Communities across NSW call on the Berejiklian Government to DESIST immediately from all attempts to destroy local councils including Woollahra, and to DEMERGE by legislation or otherwise councils forced to become mega bureaucracies against the will of their communities. Otherwise Premier – just RESIGN!**

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